

Read John 21: 15-19

Sometimes referred to as the reinstatement of Peter, this episode follows on as a conversation had after breakfast between Jesus and Peter. Much is often made of the three times that Peter is asked to affirm his commitment and how this cancels out the three times he had previously denied Jesus (John 18: 15-18). However, I am struck by what it is exactly that Jesus says.

He talks about love: asking three times if Simon Peter loves him.

He commands Simon Peter to feed his lambs, tend his sheep and again, to feed his sheep.

What are we to make of this?

Seems that Jesus is reminding Simon Peter of what leadership/discipleship in the style of Jesus Christ looks like. The key requirement is to love Jesus. This is made plain, but to be honest it can sometimes be quite hard to break it down in a way that we can understand. It is a feeling thing, but we have to have knowledge of Jesus in order to understand who it is who is the object of our love. Perhaps the instructions to feed and to tend can help us here. Caring for each other is fundamental to being followers of Jesus and is how we show our love for him. After he washes the feet of the disciples, Jesus states that it is by loving one another that people will be able to spot that we are Christians (John 13: 34-35).

These days of separation, anxiety, isolation and illness are a season for us to demonstrate this. Loving, feeding tending, caring...these are all things that we must be seen to be doing in order for people to see that our love of Jesus and love of others is a real thing!

Gerard

Prayers

Read: Psalm 23 and Matthew 22:35-39

Good Shepherd

You demand our all: for you have given us all.

Would you help us to commit ourselves to loving you and serving you.

In these times
of illness and loss
of uncertainty and loneliness
of separation and compromise

Help us to keep loving you, loving each other
even as we love ourselves.

In all we feel within
In all we express
In all we don't express

Help us to keep loving you, loving each other
even as we love ourselves.

Good shepherd
Guide us, lead us
Keep teaching us how to love.
Keep teaching us to trust in your goodness
and mercy
Which will follow us all our days.

We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. he restores my soul.

He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;

your rod and your staff, they comfort me."